

2/17/2009 This Week in Congress

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February 17, 2009

Dear Friend,

This week, Congress is out of session in observance of the President's Day holiday. I am spending this week back in Kansas, holding town hall meetings as part of my annual "Big First" Listening Tour. I hope you find this newsletter useful.

Voting 'No' on Massive Spending Bill

There are steps that we must take to stabilize the economy and get people to work. However, the massive spending bill that I voted against last week is not the right plan to improve our current economic condition. The bill spent a massive amount of money on unnecessary projects and programs. Bundling a large collection of spending and calling it a 'stimulus' does not make it stimulative.

The purpose of a 'stimulus' package should be to spend a dollar in a way that will create greater than a dollar's worth of economic benefit. Targeted spending on programs which are proven to create jobs or reducing tax burdens on workers and small businesses is what the government should be focused on.

We need to get the country moving. Unfortunately, this is the wrong plan that will add billions of dollars of unnecessary spending to our national debt without sufficiently stimulating job growth.

Reviewing Treasury Secretary's Financial Plan

This week, Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner released the administration's "financial stability plan." which explains how the government will spend the remaining half of the \$700 billion financial bailout that passed last fall. I continue to be opposed to using taxpayers' dollars to bailout Wall Street's bad decisions. After the first half of the bailout funds were irresponsibly spent, I have serious concerns how the second half will be spent.

After reviewing the secretary's plan, I found that it lacks specific details needed to determine if it will be effective. We need an accountable and trustworthy oversight process implemented into the relief program. Oversight of spending must be an important detail for the plan if we are going to work to avoid another failed bailout. I believe it is imperative that Secretary Geithner provides additional details to the Congress and the public.

Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee Meeting Discusses FAA

On Wednesday, I attended a Subcommittee on Aviation hearing on reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Every three to five years the Congress reauthorizes FAA's funding and programs. During the last Congress, the House passed a FAA reauthorization legislation which would significantly modernize the antiquated system that our air traffic controllers use to keep our skies safe. This was done without instituting a "user fee" system which would have harmful consequences on the general aviation community and Kansas's economy. Unfortunately, the Senate did not act on this legislation. During this hearing we heard from all interested parties on what a new FAA bill for this Congress should include.

Visiting the National Cotton Council Annual Meeting

On Friday, I spoke to the Nation Cotton Council (NCC), which was holding its annual meeting in Washington, D.C. I spoke with those in attendance about the challenges faced by agriculture in the coming years, the status of international trade and implementation of the 2008 Farm Bill. While at the NCC annual meeting, I was also able to visit with Robert Miller of Wellington, who is serving as the 2008 Kansas Cotton Association President and as a 2008 American Cotton Producer's Committee Member.

Kansas is one of the most recent cotton producing states. In 2008, Kansas cotton producers grew 28,000 acres and produced 40,000 bales of cotton. Although significant, the 2008 numbers are down from a high of 110,000 acres and 117,000 bales of cotton in 2006.

Visiting the Members of the National Agriculture Aviation Association

On Friday morning, I spoke to the National Agriculture Aviation Association (NAAA), which was holding its annual meeting in Washington, D.C. I spoke with those in attendance about the challenges faced by many small businesses in rural America where increasing costs, burdensome regulations and shrinking populations make it more difficult for family

businesses to survive. I updated the group on the status of reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and discussed the recent 6th Circuit Court of Appeals decision concerning application of pesticides by farmers and custom applicators. The 6th Circuit decision has the potential to subject every farmer and pesticide applicator to a costly and burdensome permit system under the Clean Water Act.

While at the NAAA annual meeting, I was able to visit with Doug Chanay of Garden City, who is serving as the 2008 NAAA President and his son, Jeff Chanay, who was also in attendance. I was also able to visit with many other Kansas agriculture aviators during the annual meeting.

Meeting with Salina Delegation in Washington, D.C.

On Thursday, members of the Salina delegation met with me to talk about current issues affecting Saline County. They provided an update on the Schilling Air Force Base project and discussed the status of the agreement between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Department of Justice. It was also good to hear of news about defense and regional projects which are taking place. I am always glad to talk with Kansas leaders about current issues and accomplishments that are impacting the cities and counties they represent. [Click here to view a photo.](#)

Thanks to Jason Gage, city manager; Randy Duncan, Saline County Chairman; Luci Larson, Vice Mayor of Salina; Dr. Robert Winter, Salina School District Superintendent; Tim Rogers, executive director of the Salina Airport Authority; and Denis Lauver, president of the Salina Chamber.

Accepting Above & Beyond Citizen Honors Nominations

I announced this week that I will be accepting Above & Beyond Citizen Honors nominations over the next week. The award is given by The Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation to recognize and honor Americans who have demonstrated selflessness or courage in extraordinary ways. Kansans are encouraged to nominate someone who has demonstrated a "service above self" or has performed "above and beyond" their professional area. To nominate any someone for this award, please visit the Above & Beyond Web site at <http://www.aboveandbeyond365.com/>.

You may also contact any one of my following offices for more information or for the nomination form:

The forms can also be accessed by calling any of Moran's offices:

Washington, D.C. - (202) 225-2715

Hays District Office - (785) 628-6401

Hutchinson District Office - (620) 665-6138

Salina District Office - (785) 309-0572

Congratulations to the New President of Kansas State University

This week, the Kansas Board of Regents selected Kirk Schulz as the 13th president of Kansas State University. Kirk will serve as the next president of K-State and will succeed Jon Wefald. President Wefald successfully served as the president for the university for the past 23 years. I thank him and his wife, Ruth Ann, for their continuous dedication and commitment they have given to the university. Kirk spent the past seven years as the vice president for research and economic development at Mississippi State University. I wish him and his family great success.

Attending Kansas State University Basketball Game

On Saturday afternoon, I had the opportunity to attend the Kansas State University versus the University of Kansas basketball game in Manhattan. Basketball has long been a tradition to many Kansans, and I was glad to be joined by my family for the game. Thanks to KSU and to head coach Frank Martin for their hospitality.

Annual Listening Tour Continues

I will continue my listening tour this week with stops in Sherman and Ford counties. They are scheduled as follows:

Thursday, February 19

Sherman County Tour Stop, Goodland

Time: 7:30-8:30 a.m. Mountain Time

Location: Northwest Kansas Technical College, in the Student Union, 1209 Harrison

Friday, February 20

Ford County Tour Stop, Dodge City

Time: 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Location: Fairpoint Communications, Inc., 908 W. Frontview Street

[Click here to stay up-to-date on stops still being scheduled.](#)

In the Office

Mark Swope of Leavenworth and Brian Hundley of Atchinson were in with the Council of Prison Locals to discuss plans for a new Federal Bureau of Prisons facility in Leavenworth and other issues concerning the Leavenworth U.S. Penitentiary.

Teresa Wilke of Lawrence was in with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to talk about staffing needs.

Rod Holub of Manhattan was in with the National Letter Carriers Association to talk about the financial situation of the U.S. Postal Service.

Shirley Brown and Dan Ansdale of Gardner, Joseph Sopcich of Overland Park, Don Weiss and Melody Rayl of Olathe, Dick Carter of Topeka, Lynn Mitchelson of Mission Woods, and Terry Calaway and Jay Antle of Lenexa were in the office with Johnson County Community College to underline the importance of the Stimulus package and to bring me up-to-date on the college's future expansion plans.

Bob Finuf and Chad Moore of Kansas City were in the office with Children's Mercy Family Health Partners to talk about the Medicaid drug rebate.

Dr. Michael Burke of Wichita was in the office with the Kansas Psychiatric Society to visit with me about increasing more mental health professionals in rural areas and the importance of privacy in Health Information Technology.

Dr. Ed Berger of Hutchinson, with Hutchinson Community College, was in to tell me about plans to renovate the current science building on campus into a Physical and Biotechnology Science Center to better prepare students for health-related professions.

Leonard Silkey of Wichita and Chikako Mochizuki of Lawrence were in the office with the National Federation of the Blind of Kansas to tell me about the Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Act.

Carl Heilman and Mike Johnson of Great Bend were in the office with Barton County Community College to discuss their education role and partnership with Fort Riley.

Jolene Niernberger of Hays was in with National Senior Corps Association to explain the importance of the Foster Grandparent program and the Senior Corps programs to Kansas.

Jackie Viette and Ted Dankert of El Dorado, Ted Albright of Towanda, and Carter Zerbe of Augusta were in the office with Butler Community College to visit with me about the importance of Carl Perkins programs and the Pell Grant program to students.

J. D Rein of Great Bend was in the office with Alternacare to tell me about the need for the Durable Medical Equipment competitive bidding program to be repealed.

Deb Crawl of Emporia, Elaine Edwards of Salina, and Nancy Atwater of Overland Park were in the office with the Kansas Association for the Education of Young Children to discuss the importance of funding early childhood education programs.

Bret Healy of Topeka was in the office with the Kansas Bioscience Authority to tell me about the recent activities of the KBA Bioenergy working group including progress on the proposed Center of Innovation in Bioenergy and Biorefining.

Fred Cholick, Ralph Richardson, Ron Trewyn, John English, Kent Glasscock, Steve White, Marty Vanier, Michael Helmstetter, and Sue Peterson of Manhattan were in the office with Kansas State University to discuss the university's proposed research activities for the coming year.

Melinda Sorem of Jetmore was in with Women Involved in Farm Economics (WIFE) to tell me about WIFE's position on a wide range of issues including crop insurance, energy, immigration reform, and health care.

John Thaemert of Sylvan Grove, Jerry McReynolds of Woodston, Joe Kejr of Brookville, Paul Penner of Hillsboro, Gary Millershaski of Lakin, Dusti Fritz of Manhattan and Larry Kepley of Ulysses were in the office with the Kansas Association of Wheat Growers (KAWG) to discuss KAWG's concerns with implementation of the 2008 Farm Bill.

Greg Krissek of Colwich, Bret Healy of Olathe, Sue Schulte of Garnett, and Will Bramblett of Coolidge were in with the National Sorghum Producers Association to visit with me about proposals for sorghum research and bioenergy proposals.

Colleen Anderson of Council Grove was in the office with Flint Hills Kansas Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Council to discuss her support for the activities of RC&D councils across the state.

Several Kansans were in the office with the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America to tell me about youth substance abuse prevention efforts in their area schools and communities. In were Teresa Walters, Margi Grimwood, Ardith Holmes, and Dorothy Jochem of Emporia, Kitty Frank and Mary Sharp of Strong City, Sue Evans of Colby, Joyce Cussimano of Topeka and Jason Verbeckmoer of Olathe.

Mike Copeland, Jim Randall, Pat All, Harlan Parker, Rita Ashley, Tim McKay, and Tim Danneberg of Olathe were in the office with the City of Olathe to discuss their 2008 for their community. They shared with me their survey that shows that 88 percent of Olathe residents are satisfied with their quality of life. I look forward to working together with Olathe in the future.

Mike Maddox of Leawood, Amy Blankenbiller of Topeka, Mike Kelly of Shawnee, and Mike Morgan of Wichita were in the office with Kansas Chamber of Commerce and Industry to tell me about their efforts to reduce health care costs which are a top concern of business owners in Kansas. With the national economy in a major recession, it is nice to see the KCCI work to help businesses in our state remain competitive.

Roger Sewell of Pratt with High Tech Gin, Jerry Stuckey of Moscow with the Northwest Cotton Growers Co-Op and Gary Feist of Anthony with the Kansas Cotton Association were in the office to discuss transportation issues.

Several Kansans visited my Washington, D.C., office to receive a tour of the United States Capitol. Receiving tours were Anthony Kobler of Hays, Scott Jackson of Miller, Missouri, and Margi Grimwood, Ardith Holmes, Dorothy Jochem and Teresa Walters of Emporia. Keith Haberer of Russell and Fred Whitman of Paradise also received tours.

Several Kansans dropped by my Washington, D.C., office this week including David Kensinger of Topeka and Darrell Schumway of Pratt.

Very truly yours,

Jerry